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ADDRESS.

THAT man, would form a very inadequate and erroneous estimate, alike of his character and his duties, of his dignity and happiness, who should consider himself only as an individual, isolated and detached from the general body of society around him.—Shut up in his own narrow sphere; engrossed by his own poor and trivial concerns; his affections stagnant and lifeless; the energies alike of his moral and intellectual nature cramped and restrained, he would exhibit but few, and faint traces of that lofty, aspiring and generous being, on whom was enstamped the glowing impress of his maker's image. It is in society alone, that he finds the appropriate sphere of his discipline and his duties. It is in the shock and conflict of active life, where strength is opposed to strength, and skill arrayed against skill in fair and honourable competition, that his character is matured, and the native energies of his mind receive their full developement. It is here, too, that the affections of his heart find room for vigorous and healthful exercise. Feeling his inti-

mate and necessary relation to the whole family of man, his fraternal kindness embraces them all; his very being, so to speak, expands itself in every direction; his sympathies are awakened, and spread from link to link, till they kindle and glow along the whole electrical chain of society. It is here, in short, that his whole character as a moral being, and an heir of immortality, rises from its depression, shakes itself free from the grovelling influences which had fettered and bound it to the earth, and stands erect in its native dignity and elevation. The same remarks are substantially true, when transferred from individuals to the successive races of mankind. Cut off from all participation in the past and in the future; shut out from retrospection, and from hope and foretaste, how little could be accomplished or enjoyed by any one generation of men. Knowledge would wither and die for want of nutriment: generous emulation, and honourable ambition,—where would they find their motives, or their objects? Were this little span of existence, this transient point of consciousness and feeling, the only field in which memory and imagination were allowed to expatiate, it were hardly worth an anxious thought. The language of licentious skepticism, would be, for generations as well as individuals, the language of common sense: “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,” and our memory shall perish. But it is not so. No: we have an interest intimate and palpable, in the characters and achievements of those who have gone before us. Their virtues, their acquirements, their generous enterprise, their firm and

resolute bearing, have descended as a legacy to us. It is in our power, and it is our duty, to identify ourselves with the good and wise of past ages; to become partakers in their deeds and in their fame—to cover ourselves with the glory which encircled them, by adopting their principles, and studying their example. They and we are but parts of one connected whole; but separate links in one extensive chain. Our interest and our reputation are, in the scheme of Providence, inseparably blended with theirs. The splendour of their example will shed a bright lustre on our characters, if we are worthy; or exhibit in stronger contrast the dark lines of our degeneracy. So true is it, with regard to generations of men, no less than to individuals, that none liveth to himself. Placed thus on this isthmus of a middle state, sustaining a two-fold relation at once to our ancestors and posterity, it becomes us to send back our thoughts to gather instruction and encouragement from the past; and by a prudent foresight, and rational anticipation, to live and operate along the whole line of future generations. This is the dictate of sound wisdom, and approves itself at once to the understanding and the heart. Why else has history been employed in gathering, and transmitting to us, the lessons of departed days? In vain does she hold up her torch before our eyes, unless we avail ourselves of its light to direct our steps in the dark and devious course of human affairs.

These thoughts, if just and pertinent at all, can hardly be inappropriate to the present occasion. We are assembled to commemorate an event that

has no parallel in the history of man. We come here as the sons of the *Pilgrims* to claim our share in the inheritance of their virtues ; to assert our relation, and to endeavour to catch something of the spirit of that relation, to those illustrious men, who, on this day, laid the foundation of this mighty empire. Let us then endeavour to diffuse our intellectual and moral being beyond the limits of present objects, and sensible existences ; and to enjoy a retrospective participation in the great event we celebrate. From the tumults and passions which agitate the living world, let us withdraw to the tomb to take counsel of the dead, to listen to the dictates of departed wisdom. Let us ascend in imagination, to that eventful day, when that band of ocean wanderers, few but undismayed, first set foot on that dreary and storm beaten coast, to which Providence had guided their course. Expelled by the relentless spirit of religious bigotry and intolerance from their native land ; behind them the ocean ; before, a trackless and immeasurable wilderness, beneath an icebound and inhospitable soil, and above, a Heaven already blackened with the storms of winter ; how dark was the prospect which spread itself to their view. Hope, in her utmost excursions, could find no resting place, nor a single olive-leaf to bring back as the symbol of brighter days. Well might their courage have sunk, and their hearts died within them. And so they would, had their spirits drank vigour only from the ordinary sources of human fortitude. But, they had been disciplined in the school of adversity, and trained to combat with difficulties and hardships. They had long

been accustomed to look danger and death in the face, and to make light of both when they met them in the path of duty. They were men who had long since shaken hands with the world—who had laid their account with enduring its scorn and contempt, as well as its hostility, and had learned to despise them all. On such spirits, the frowns of power, and the blandishments of pleasure were alike void of influence. The storms of political commotion, of religious persecution, of adverse fortune, of calamity and suffering, in all the shapes that flesh is heir to, beat upon their heads in vain. Collected in their own inherent energies, they stood “like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved.” Difficulties which would have crushed the spirits, and withered the energies of ordinary minds, were shaken from them, “like dew-drops from the lion’s mane.” What was it, do you ask? that gave this preternatural exaltation to their characters—this super-human energy to their minds? It was the spirit of devotion—it was the stern, unbending, uncompromising principle of their religious faith, operating on a deep-rooted and unconquerable attachment to civil liberty. It was, that the anchor of their steadfastness was fixed in Heaven, that they had been taught to fear God; and to set light by human terrors. It was, that they *would* not, and *dared* not violate the dictates of their consciences; and thought no sacrifices too great for the preservation of their integrity. These were the principles which led them to brave the terrors of the deep, and the more fearful terrors of an unknown world. It was these that

" Brought them from that goodly land,
 " The turf their childhood trod,
 " The hearths on which their infants played,
 " The tombs in which their sires were laid—
 " The altars of their God."

They had not entered on these mighty measures with any blind and confident rashness, which closed their eyes against the foresight of the future. They were men of clear and far-reaching views. They had coolly and deliberately counted the cost. In the calm and settled tranquillity of their own firm minds, they had fairly weighed the consequences of the procedure, after taking counsel at the oracle of God. In one scale, were placed ease, comfort, their native land, their home and their fire-sides, with all their endeared associations ; and in the other, the undisturbed enjoyment of the rights of conscience alone. The balance hung not long in doubtful poise. They had left the civilized world behind them ; they had bidden an eternal adieu to every thing that embellishes society, and sweetens the cup of life ; they had severed at once, all those ties that wind themselves most closely about the heart, and which fasten with the firmest grasp on the noblest and finest spirits, to seek an asylum on the rock-bound shores of New-England, amidst the recesses of primeval forests, inhabited only by savage beasts and more savage men. Their firm confidence in God was their pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. This fortified their hearts, and nerved their arms, and steeled their spirits to endurance, amidst the keenest sufferings, and most appalling dangers, by which man was ever beset. Landed in a climate t

which they were strangers, at the shutting in of a winter of unprecedented severity, they found themselves without a shelter to protect, or food to sustain them. Of the dispositions of their savage neighbours, they had no accurate knowledge. Dark and uncertain reports, facts ill ascertained, or but half understood, had taught them to fear the worst. It was necessary to adopt immediate measures of precaution and defence, and to exercise the most unremitting vigilance. But, whatever were the external circumstances of danger to which they were exposed, others, less equivocal, and far more terrible, beset them from within. Famine and disease, in their ghastliest forms, assailed them, wasted their strength, consumed their spirits, and ere the first breath of returning spring, consigned one half of their number to the grave. Yet, amidst these accumulated sufferings and horrors, they forgot not themselves, nor the great cause in which they were embarked. Their minds would seem to have been filled with the contemplation of those mighty results from their exertions and endurance, which, within a few generations, were to astonish and delight the world. And if, at any time, the weakness of humanity yielded to the pressure of adverse circumstances, and gloomy forebodings weighed upon their hearts, they knew where to rekindle the lamp of hope. They resorted to the altar of God, where the vestal fires of devotion were never extinguished; they resorted to their bibles, and refreshed and reinvigorated their spirits at the living fountains

of the sacred oracles. To the accumulated difficulties and hardships of their situation—difficulties and hardships, of which it is hardly possible for us to form an adequate conception—war with the savages was speedily added—war in its most appalling aspect, with an enemy equally bold, cunning and vindictive ; an enemy, against whom the ordinary precautions of warfare were almost useless ; whose movements, secret and silent as the approach of the pestilence, were only discovered by their desolating effects, by the groans of the dying, and the glare of conflagrated dwellings. For nearly a century after the first settlement of the country, our ancestors can hardly be said to have laid aside their armour. Armed men tilled the soil, and armed men gathered the harvest. None of the ordinary business of life could be transacted in security ; and when they betook themselves to their nightly repose, it was always with more or less of apprehension, that their slumbers might be broken by the war-whoop, and the darkness of midnight illuminated by the blaze of their dwellings. The very devotions of the sanctuary were often interrupted by the din and shock of arms. Yet, amidst the tumults of such a life as this, our ancestors found leisure to care for the welfare of future generations. They suffered not their minds to be engrossed by the pressing exigencies—by the appalling dangers even—of the passing day ; but, sent out their thoughts far onward to succeeding times. They did not think their duty discharged when they had made provision for the security of their firesides, and the suste-

nance of their bodies, while their souls were "hungering for the bread of life." The intellectual and moral cultivation of themselves, and posterity, formed one of the primary objects of their attention. In every village and hamlet, the school-house and the church rose side by side, and of their hard-earned sustenance, each contributed his share, with hearty good will, to the support of their intellectual and religious guides. So true is this, that it is doubtful, whether the great purposes of education, in its broadest sense, have been more thoroughly accomplished at any subsequent time, than during the period in question. To whom, let me ask, are we indebted for the civil and religious institutions, which form at once our glory and defence? Who founded our colleges and schools of learning? Who led the way, and left us their example, in the establishment of benevolent societies, by whose operations, not only are the social principles of our nature strengthened, and the warm charities of the heart enlarged in mutual intercourse; but light, and joy, and gratitude, and hope are carried into the dark and chill abodes of indigence, disease and sorrow? And from whose example were derived the habits, and from whose spirit were caught the energy and firmness that even now distinguish—God grant they may long distinguish—the inhabitants of New-England?

Such is a faint sketch of the character of those men from whom it is our glory to be descended. Is it possible to contemplate the picture, without a glow at once of devout gratitude to Heaven, and of conscious elevation of

spirit ? How different were these high-minded, but sober men, from the first settlers of any other country, with whose history we are conversant. These have been generally composed of the froth and feculence which society throws off in its periods of agitation and ferment—those restless and perturbed spirits, who cannot breathe the air of tranquillity, and who find their proper element only when the atmosphere is in commotion, and the spirit of mischief is abroad. The first settlers of New-England, on the contrary, were fitted alike to support and adorn the fabric of a well ordered polity. They were men who knew how to guard their own rights, while they respected the rights of others. They were men of whom the world was not worthy. Of their services, their country might have availed herself with advantage ; for they might, many of them at least, have entered the career of honour on equal terms, with the choicest spirits of their time. But, their country, her unprincipled courtiers, her bigotted priests, and pedant king, treated their fair claims with contemptuous disregard. Blind to the future, they saw not that they were the involuntary instruments in the hands of Heaven, for accomplishing the great purpose of its wisdom and benevolence. Had the British court and hierarchy been less bigotted and intolerant, the settlement of this country might have been delayed for a century, and the progress of society throughout the world, been retarded in proportion. For it is not necessary here to state how much the example of the new world has operated on the old. It was in the “fulness of time,”

when the state of things throughout christendom, was ripe for the measure, that the germ of our civil and religious polity, was planted by our fathers on these western shores. It sprang, at first, faint and doubtful from the soil, exposed to all the winds of heaven—to all the fury of the elements ; but, it was shielded by their care, and nurtured by their blood. It soon struck its roots deep, and sent its boughs aloft to Heaven. It has spread its mighty arms from ocean to ocean, and from the polar snows to the burning line. Millions repose under its shadow, and regale on its fruits ; and its leaves shall yet, as we trust, be for the healing of the nations.

To their characters, adequate justice has never been done ; the harvest of their fame is still to be gathered. So great is the debt, and so strong the feeling, of gratitude, to the heroes and sages who achieved our independence, that we are apt to overlook, or forget, the obligations equally high which we are under to those who preceded them. The lustre of this splendid period of our history dazzles our eyes, and dims our perception of other periods only less brilliant because more remote. To the heroes of the revolution, we owe, indeed, as much as any community can owe to mortal services. Perish the hand, that would pluck one laurel from their brows, or quench a single ray in the halo of glory that surrounds their fame. But let them not *engross* our gratitude, or admiration. They have no title to do so. It is not to their exertions, nor to their days, that we are to trace the origin of our civil and political privileges. They did but defend, nobly and heroically it is

true, the inheritance transmitted to them from other times. They did but guard from violation the sacred fire, which they found burning on their paternal altars. The spirit by which they were actuated, was the spirit of the Pilgrims; the institutions, for the defence of which they jeopardized their lives and shed their blood, were the institutions of the Pilgrims. The rights they asserted were the same which their ancestors had enjoyed and exercised, from the first settlement of the country; they neither sought for, nor acquired any thing new. It is hardly with a due regard to propriety of language, perhaps, that our separation from Britain has been denominated a *revolution*.

It was to prevent change, not to produce it; to resist the introduction of novel practices, that our fathers had resort to arms. The frame of our civil polity, of our internal administration—all those usages and customs, which most intimately affect the character and happiness of a people, are substantially the same now as they were left by the Pilgrims and their immediate descendants. They have only accommodated themselves to the changes in our external relations; have only “grown with our growth;” but their spirit remains unchanged. The time will assuredly come, when the transactions of this period, and of these men, shall command more attention, and awaken a deeper interest than they have hitherto done. Their characters and exploits shall kindle into enthusiasm, the future historians of our country; and our bards, catching inspiration from the theme, shall embalm their memory in immortal song.

GENTLEMEN OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY,

How interesting to us are the recollections which this day brings with it, the feelings and associations it awakens. Though placed by Providence at a distance from our native land, our affections are not alienated, our feelings are not estranged from it; oh no, true as the needle to the pole, they still tend towards it, as the central point of their attraction. Our hearts still burn within us, as its idea rises on our memory. Its fair fields, and green hills—the deep-sequestered gloom of its forests—its clear streams—its mountain torrents—the rude grandeur of its precipices—its rocky promontories and storm-vest coast—and all the varied features of beauty and sublimity which mark its natural scenery—the theatres too of our childish sports, and youthful rambles, and the objects associated with our earliest feelings of devotion—the village spire—the sound of the church going bell; and the impressive stillness of her sabbath morns—does not the recollection of them come over our minds with a fresh, vivid, and soul-subduing influence? It was there that our young minds received their first impressions of truth and duty—there that our affections were trained to their proper exercise—there that our imaginations were first awakened to the perception of the lovely and the grand in the works of God—there, in short, that our minds took a permanent complexion, and our characters a bias, which will probably guide and control our destiny forever. These circumstances constitute a bond of union with the land of our fathers, which nothing but death can sever; they create an interest in her

welfare, a sympathy with her fortunes, which time and distance can hardly weaken. Should we never again look abroad over her fair landscape with these mortal eyes, yet to the mental vision it will often rise full and bright, withdrawing our attention from the cares and vexations of active life, and beguiling the weariness of many an hour in our pilgrimage here. Nor let it be thought that we shall, by cherishing this deep-rooted attachment to our native soil, be the less disposed to discharge our obligations as members of the community in which Providence has cast our lot. On the contrary, it will tend to stimulate our activity and zeal, to make us better men, and better citizens, wherever we sojourn. As that man's philanthropy may well be suspected in whose heart the love of his country reigns not, so that patriotism can hardly be other than spurious, which springs not from local attachment. Yes, there is a natural connexion between all the generous emotions of the heart, all the higher and holier aspirations of our nature. Each in its proper exercise, tends to give vigour and efficiency to the rest. If then, the thoughts at this time suggested, tend, in any measure, to strengthen our attachment to our native land, to awaken our admiration of the character of our forefathers; to enkindle our gratitude for the legacy they have left us; and to excite a generous emulation of their virtues, the object of the speaker will have been accomplished, and the great purposes of this association promoted.

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